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For Black History Month at Naval Medical Logistics Command, It's Academic!

BY VJOHNSON – MARCH 6, 2014

POSTED IN: FEATURES

By Julius Evans, Naval Medical Logistics Command Public Affairs

Naval Medical Logistics Command celebrated African American/Black History Month, Feb. 26, at its headquarters in Frederick, Md., on Fort Detrick, with a program resembling a popular game show.

"It's Academic" is the nation's foremost high school quiz program that showcases outstanding, high-achieving teenagers. At NMLC, command personnel participated by exhibiting their knowledge of thoroughly researched historical facts while competing in a team setting.

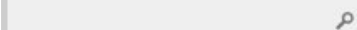


Keeping score, Meradith Morina tracks the day's results to keep the tally for the three teams competing in Naval Medical Logistics Command's African American/Black History Month version of It's Academic, <http://www.itsacademicquizshow.com/>.

(Photo by Julius Evans)

Headed by Capt. Mary S. Seymour, NMLC has a long and active history of recognizing diversity through varied activities. This year, NMLC's diversity committee called upon its members to develop the theme, envision the props and create all the aspects of the game show that would be fitting for the type of recognition deserving of this observance.

"Extensive research went into developing today's presentation of 'It's Academic' for the African American/Black History Month celebration," said Melanie Muscar, NMLC's supervisory contracting officer. "Using numerous on-line websites including biography.com, worldhistoryproject.com, archives.gov, naacp.org, and pbs.com, facts were



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transformed into multiple choice questions, true/false questions and general trivia.”

This year’s theme was “Civil Rights in America” so the diversity committee framed some of the questions around pop culture and followed the traditional rules of the television game show that requires math and science questions be interjected into the rounds. One question asked, “If you add three to the square root of 144, the result is the amendment that couldn’t deny voting rights to a citizen on the basis of race, color or previous condition of servitude.” (The answer will be revealed elsewhere in this article).

Audience members found the questions and answers fascinating and very informative.

“The ‘It’s Academic’ format for the Black History celebration was a refreshing and memorable way to celebrate and increase awareness of the lasting contributions African Americans made throughout U.S. history,” said Cmdr. Shikina Tellis, deputy director, operational forces directorate.

Other participants also shared their thoughts on the day’s event.

“Some might think playing a game on such an important topic such as Black History belittles the struggle. I disagree because it encourages participation and involvement. Games have proven a good way to reach out to those that might not normally get involved,” said Rachel Pardo, an NMLC program/management analyst. “Competition appeals to people. The goal was to engage and educate those who attended. This event engaged people. There was no way to attend and not get involved. Also, everyone learned something they did not previously know. People got out of their seats, shouted, rooted the players on and became participants!”

One of the event’s organizers commented on the significance of having command participation in events like this one.

“This year marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as assigned by the 15th Amendment). To think that it has only been 50 years is pretty amazing to me,” Muscar said. “But it also makes me excited to see what types of changes the next 50 years hold for us as our nation continues to fight for equality for all citizens.”

Muscar also discussed why supporting diversity is a value that takes precedence throughout the year.

“Regardless of the month being observed, NMLC’s diversity committee is committed to showcasing each observance in unique and interesting ways. Just as our command, community, and country are diverse, we celebrate diversity by hosting different types of events that offer something for everyone,” she continued. “Considering NMLC’s mission, events such as today offer a break for command personnel to laugh, recharge their batteries and to have camaraderie with the rest of our shipmates – particularly ones that we might not generally work with day-to-day. Supporting events offered by the diversity committee not only strengthen our diversity footprint, but it also strengthens our NMLC family relationships.”

Already looking ahead to other diversity events for the year, command members have asked that game shows such as “Minute to Win It” and “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” be considered for the future events.

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What a fun way to learn about African American history. Kudos.